

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3406

S E C R E T CAIRO 22751

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EG, US, IS, UK

SUBJECT: UK AMBASSADOR'S TALK WITH VP MUBARAK AND

- CALLAGHAN LETTER TO SADAT

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH VP MUBARAK THIS MORNING, HE MENTIONED THAT UK AMBASSADOR MORRIS HAD COME TO SEE HIM EARLIER IN THE DAY. SUBSEQUENTLY, AT MORRIS' REQUEST, HE AND I MET LATE THIS AFTERNOON.

2. MORRIS RELATED THAT HE HAD GIVEN MUBARAK A LETTER FROM PRIMIN CALLAGHAN FOR SADAT. THE LETTER WAS SENT AFTER BEGIN VISIT TO LONDON. ACCORDING TO MORRIS, CALLAGHAN'S LETTER INDICATED THAT BEGIN HAD SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER SENIOR USG OFFICIALS GAVE "FULL SUPPORT" TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROPOSAL. CALLAGHAN COULD NOT VOUCH FOR THIS, BUT CONSIDERED THE BEGIN PLAN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND IMAGINATIVE APPROACH. HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT HMG ENDORSES IT. HE HOPED THAT IT MIGHT SERVE AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. HE HAD MADE SOME SUBSTANTIVE SUGGESTIONS TO BEGIN ON

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 22751 231723Z

THE PROPOSED WEST BANK ARRANGEMENTS. CALLAGHAN LETTER APPARENTLY ALSO SPOKE OF A THREE TO FIVE YEAR TIMEFRAME FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI. MUBARAK IMMEDIATELY COMMENTED THAT NO SUCH EXTENDED TIMEFRAME HAD BEEN MENTIONED BY WEIZMAN. IN FACT, SADAT HAD SPOKEN OF THE NEED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER 78 OR AT THE END OF 78 AT THE LATEST.

3. MORRIS SAID MUBARAK HAD ALSO FILLED HIM IN ON THE TALKS WITH WEIZMAN. JUDGING FROM HIS ACCOUNT, THE BRIEFING WAS VERY SIMILAR TO BRIEFINGS SADAT AND MUBARAK HAD GIVEN ME, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT AS DETAILED. MUBARAK HAD MADE A POINT OF MENTIONING THE ISRAELI DESIRE TO RETAIN THE TWO AIR-FIELDS AND SADAT'S REFUSAL. THE VP HAD MADE A POINT OF STRESSING THAT ANY ACCEPTANCE BY SADAT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ISRAELI RETENTION OF BASES OR SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI WOULD CAUSE THE PRESIDENT TO BE REPUDIATED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY, NOT TO MENTION FRIENDLY ARAB STATES. (IN THIS CONNECTION, I NEGLECTED TO REPORT IN MY EARLIER MESSAGE THAT MUBARAK TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT HE HAS FOR PAST TWO DAYS BEEN RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS FROM SENIOR EGYPTIANS, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, ASKING ABOUT UPCOMING SADAT/BEGIN MEETING. NINETY PERCENT OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED, MUBARAK SAID, HAVE TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT THE ISRAELIS WILL BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN MILITARY BASES AND/OR SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI. THE CALLERS ARE ALL STRONGLY AGAINST ANY SUCH RETENTION. MUBARAK SAID HE HAS ASSURED THEM SADAT WILL NEVER AGREE TO ANY SUCH DEMANDS.)

4. COMMENT: YOU MAY HAVE SEEN CALLAGHAN LETTER. HOWEVER, IF ACCOUNT OF CALLAGHAN LETTER IS CORRECT, IT CONTAINS TWO UNFORTUNATE STATEMENTS: FIRST, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER SENIOR USG OFFICIALS HAVE ALLEGEDLY GIVEN "FULL SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 22751 231723Z

SUPPORT" TO THE BEGIN PLAN. THIS WILL AGAIN AROUSE UNEASINESS IN SADAT'S MIND THAT, DESPITE OUR DISCLAIMERS, WE DO SUPPORT THE BEGIN PLAN. SECOND, THE REFERENCE TO THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE IN SINAI SPREAD OVER THREE TO FIVE YEARS. AFTER YESTERDAY'S MEETING WITH WEIZMAN, THIS WILL ADD TO SADAT'S DEPRESSION. SADAT IS GETTING THE BEGIN PLAN IN DRIBLETS, WHICH MAY BE OF SOME HELP IN MAKING IT LESS STARK WHEN BEGIN ACTUALLY PRESENTS IT. BUT EVEN WITH THIS, THE CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT HE WILL NOT LIKE WHAT HE HEARS. HOPEFULLY, HE WILL TAKE TO HEART OUR EXHORTATIONS THAT HE SHOULD REGARD THE BEGIN PROPOSALS AS EXPLORATORY AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEGOTIATION. HE DESPERATELY WANTS SOMETHING TO COME OUT OF THE TALKS AND WILL, I BELIEVE, DO EVERYTHING HE CAN TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. EILTS

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